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TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

SEE SANITIZED VERSION NLK-81-269 NLK-89-15
DOWNGRADED

CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY

CONFIDENTIAL
~~SECRET~~ (When Filled In)
CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS
NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM
NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY

COUNTRY SOUTH VIETNAM
REPORT NO. TDCS DB-3/655,517

SUBJECT COUP D'ETAT PLAN OF NGO DINH NHU
DATE DISTR. 12 JULY 1963

PRECEDENCE PRIORITY

DATE OF INFO. 11-12 JULY 1963
REFERENCES IN 78592

PLACE & DATE ACQ. VIETNAM, SAIGON (12 JULY 1963)

APPRAISAL SEE BELOW
FIELD REPORT NO. FVS 9305

THIS IS UNEVALUATED INFORMATION. SOURCE GRADINGS ARE DEFINITIVE. APPRAISAL OF CONTENT IS TENTATIVE.

SOURCE A GENERAL OFFICER (B) WHO EITHER ATTENDED THE MEETING OR WHO ACQUIRED THE INFORMATION FROM AN OFFICER WHO ATTENDED THE MEETING.

APPRAISAL NGO DINH NHU IS PROBABLY PLANNING A COUP; HOWEVER, THE TIMING OF THE COUP ATTEMPT AND THE GENERALS WHO ARE SPECIFICALLY INVOLVED ARE UNKNOWN.

1. (SUMMARY. NGO DINH NHU PROPOSED TO ARMY GENERAL OFFICERS ON 11 JULY 1963 THAT THEY STAGE A COUP D'ETAT AS SOON AS IMMEDIATELY POSSIBLE. THIS COUP MUST BE STAGED OVERNIGHT AND THE ARMY SHOULD TURN OVER CONTROL TO CIVILIANS ON THE NEXT DAY.)

2. NGO DINH NHU TOLD A GROUP OF GENERAL OFFICERS ON 11 JULY 1963 THAT THE GOVERNMENT WAS MAKING NO PROGRESS IN THE WAR AGAINST THE VIET CONG OR IN OTHER PROGRAMS AND THAT THE GENERAL OFFICERS MUST PROVIDE THE ACTION REQUIRED. THE GENERAL OFFICERS HAVE BEEN CONTINUALLY HUMILIATED IN THE EYES OF THE PEOPLE AND IN ORDER TO REGAIN POPULAR RESPECT THEY MUST ENGINEER A COUP D'ETAT.

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CLASSIFICATION — DISSEMINATION CONTROLS
NO FOREIGN DISSEM/CONTROLLED DISSEM
NO DISSEM ABROAD/BACKGROUND USE ONLY

GROUP 1 Excluded from automatic downgrading and declassification

STATE/INR	DIA	ARMY/ACSI	NAVY	AIR	JCS	SECDEF	NSA	NIC	OCI	ONE	OCR	EXO

STATE/DIR

TELEGRAM INFORMATION REPORT TELEGRAM

OPERATIONAL IMMEDIATE TO: DIRNSA (PROD WO)
STATE (RCI) (FOR HUGHES)
JCS
CNO (OP 922 Y 1)
AFSSO
DIA/CIIC
NIC
DFTI/ACSI
WHITE HOUSE SIT ROOM

FORM 10-62 1K OBSOLETE PREVIOUS EDITIONS (15-20)

NHU SAID THAT HE WOULD SUPPORT THE COUP. IN RESPONSE TO A QUERY, NHU SAID THAT THE GENERAL OFFICERS MUST SUPPORT HIM.

3. NHU SAID THAT HE WAS NOT IN ACCORD WITH THE PRESIDENT OR WITH THE ADMINISTRATION IN GENERAL. ALTHOUGH MANY PROBLEMS HAVE BEEN HANDED TO HIM, HE HAS HAD NO REAL POWER TO FORCE THE PRESIDENT OR OTHERS TO MAKE DECISIONS OR TO TAKE NECESSARY ACTION. ONLY WITHIN THE PAST YEAR, IN FACT, HAS HE HAD ANY OFFICIAL POSITION, I.E., DIRECTOR OF THE STRATEGIC HAMLET PROGRAM.

4. NHU SAID THAT THE ARRIVAL OF A NEW U.S. AMBASSADOR WOULD BRING ABOUT CHANGES AND THAT FAST ACTION WAS NECESSARY; IMMEDIATE DECISIONS MUST BE REACHED IF THE COUP IS TO OCCUR. THIS WAS THE ONLY CHANCE FOR SUCCESS. THE ARMY MUST SEIZE THE TROUBLE-MAKERS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE BUDDHIST MOVEMENT MUST BE QUELLED. NHU QUALIFIED THIS STATEMENT BY ADDING THAT HE DID NOT MEAN THE BUDDHISTS PER SE BUT THE FIVE RINGLEADERS, WHO WERE TO BLAME BECAUSE THEY HAD USED THEIR RELIGION TO FURTHER THEIR OWN AMBITIONS AND DESIGNS.

5. NHU CONTINUED BY SAYING THAT THE COUP MUST BE STAGED OVERNIGHT; IT MUST BE LIGHTNING FAST AND PROBABLY ALL THAT WOULD BE NEEDED WOULD BE A SHOW OF FORCE. ON THE FOLLOWING DAY, THE GENERAL OFFICERS MUST TURN THE GOVERNMENT OVER TO CIVILIAN CONTROL. IN RESPONSE TO A STATEMENT FROM MAJOR GENERAL NGUYEN NGOC LE, CHIEF OF VETERANS AFFAIRS, THAT SUCH AN ACTION REQUIRED

MAJOR DECISIONS AND A PLAN, NHU SAID THAT HE AND HIS WIFE AND THE GENERAL OFFICERS WOULD HAVE THE REQUIRED PLAN. NHU COMMENTED THAT HE REALIZED THAT HIS WIFE WAS NOT LIKED BY MANY PEOPLE BUT THAT SHE HAD TRIED TO HELP IN THE FIGHT FOR VIETNAM AND THAT SHE HERSELF REALIZED THAT SHE HAD MANY SHORTCOMINGS.

6. GENERAL LE THEN SAID TO NHU: "YOU SAY THAT YOU DO NOT AGREE WITH THE GOVERNMENT BUT THE PEOPLE SAY THAT YOU ARE CONCERNED WITH ALL DECISIONS MADE". NHU REPEATED HIS COMMENTS ON LACK OF POWER, FAILURE TO HAVE HIS ADVICE ACCEPTED, AND HIS LACK OF OFFICIAL POSITION IN THE GOVERNMENT.

7. GENERAL LE COMMENTED ON 12 JULY THAT ALTHOUGH NHU MIGHT BE WILLING TO OVERTHROW THE DIEM GOVERNMENT, LE THOUGHT THAT THEY SHOULD PROCEED WITHOUT NHU, ADDING THAT ALL THAT THE NHUS WANTED TO DO WAS TO SAVE THEMSELVES. (SOURCE COMMENT: ALL OF THE NHU CHILDREN HAVE BEEN BROUGHT INTO SAIGON AND WERE UNDER HEAVY GUARD. THE NHUS ALSO HAVE AN ESCAPE PLAN.)

8. BRIGADIER GENERAL PHAM XUAN CHIEU SAID ON 12 JULY THAT ANY COUP D'ETAT ACTION MUST BE TAKEN IMMEDIATELY AND THAT ALL GENERAL OFFICERS SHOULD COOPERATE.

9. COLONEL LE QUAN VIEN SAID ON 12 JULY THAT HE HAD NOT ATTENDED THE 11 JULY MEETING BUT WAS AWARE THAT SOMETHING WAS GOING ON, ADDING THAT NHU AGREED WITH DIEM THAT SOME CHANGES SHOULD BE MADE

BE MADE BEFORE AMBASSADOR DESIGNATE LODGE ARRIVED; NHU, HOWEVER, WANTED TO GO FURTHER AND HAVE A COUP D'ETAT WITHOUT DELAY.

VIEN SAID THAT THE FOLLOWING GENERAL OFFICERS WERE LEADERS IN THE COUP PLANNING GROUP: BRIGADIER GENERAL TON THAT DINH, COMMANDING GENERAL, III CORPS; COLONEL HUYNH VAN CAO, COMMANDER, IV CORPS; BRIGADIER GENERAL NGUYEN VAN LA, COMMANDER, CAPITAL AREA; AND BRIGADIER GENERAL NGUYEN KHANH, COMMANDING GENERAL, II CORPS.

VIEN MENTIONED ANOTHER GROUP THAT WOULD SUPPORT A COUP PLACING VICE PRESIDENT THO IN TEMPORARY CONTROL AS INCLUDING MAJOR GENERAL DUONG VAN MINH, MILITARY ADVISOR TO THE PRESIDENT; BRIGADIER GENERAL TRAN VAN DON, COMMANDER OF THE ARMY; AND TWO OTHERS.

10. FIELD DISSEM. STATE (AMBASSADOR), USMACV (GENERAL HARKINS), CINCPAC ARPAC PACAF PACFLT.

END OF MESSAGE